

Parent's Guide to Safe Teen Driving



The Washington State Intermediate Driver's License

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Helping Your Teen Learn to Drive Safely

More than 5,000 teens die in vehicle crashes each year in the United States, a devastating loss. Washington's new Intermediate Driver's License restrictions for teen drivers are intended to reduce collisions and deaths among teens. Parents play a critical role in this process. This booklet includes information for parents who are teaching their teens to drive.

Teen Drivers At Risk

- Fact:** Collisions cause three-fourths of all deaths among American teens and two-thirds of all deaths among Washington teens.
- Fact:** Even though teens comprise only 7 percent of all drivers in Washington, they make up 15 percent of drivers in fatal crashes.
- Fact:** Two out of three teen passenger deaths occur when another teen is driving.
- Fact:** One-third of fatal crashes involving teen drivers occur between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- Fact:** States with driving restrictions involving newly licensed teens experienced up to a 27-percent drop in teen crashes.



- Fact:** The best way to improve the driving skill of a new driver is to give them more behind-the-wheel driving experience.
- Fact:** Washington's new Intermediate Driver's License restrictions require parents to drive with teens before teens can get their license.

► GETTING A LICENSE

Step One: *Driving Permit*

Teens can get their Driving Permit when they turn age 15 if they are enrolled in a driver's education course. If they don't take driver's ed, they must wait until age 15-1/2, and pass the written test.

Driving Permit Restriction:

A teen with a Driving Permit is allowed to drive only with a licensed driver who has at least five years of driving experience.

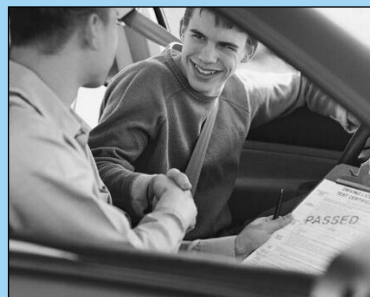
Step Two: *Intermediate Driver's License*

Intermediate Licenses are issued only to teens age 16 to 18. To get an Intermediate Driver's License, a teen must have a Driving Permit for six months and:

- Complete 50 hours of supervised driving time with a parent, or driver who has at least five years of driving experience. Also, at least 10 of those supervised driving hours must be at night.
- Have a clean driving record (for at least 6 months).
- Pass a Driver's Education Course.
- Pass the written and driving test (or just driving test if the written was passed to get the permit).

Intermediate Driver's License Restrictions:

- **For the first year:** No driving between 1am to 5am unless accompanied by parent, guardian, or licensed driver at least 25 years old.
- **For the first six months:** No passengers under age 20, except family members.



- **For the second six months:** No more than 3 passengers under age 20.

Passenger and nighttime driving restrictions expire after one year if a teen has maintained a collision-free, citation-free driving record. Restrictions can last until age 18 if a teen has a collision, commits driving violations, or gets a Minor In Possession (of alcohol) violation, or drug violation.

Step Three: *Regular Driver's License*

When a driver turns age 18, the Intermediate License becomes a regular driver's license. No new license is required.

Tips for Supervising Your Teen's Driving Time

Parents play a critical role in the training of teen drivers. Washington's new Intermediate License regulations require teens to drive at least 50 hours with their parent (or someone with at least five years of driving experience) before the teen can be eligible for an Intermediate Driver's License.

The following are some tips for getting the most out of your driving sessions. For more detailed information go to the Superintendent of Public Instruction's web site:

www.k12.wa.us/trafficsafety/Pubs/BTWfiles.asp and download, "Behind-the-Wheel Guide, A Handbook for Parents and Students". You can also download a copy of this and other teen driving materials from the Washington Traffic Safety Commission web site at: www.wtsc.wa.gov/teendriversips

Practice, Practice, Practice

Driving requires attention, judgment, perception, decision-making, physical reactions – and the ability to coordinate these skills. Time spent behind the wheel is the only way to gain the skills necessary to become a good driver. Inexperienced drivers are less able to foresee and respond to danger. Offer your teen plenty of time for practice sessions.

Practice Skills Correctly and Frequently

Provide opportunities for your teen to practice driving skills until the correct behavior becomes a habit. Turn off the radio and talk with your teen as you drive.

Discuss possible safety hazards you might encounter. Teach your teen to try to anticipate problems, to reduce reaction time. And remember, you are also teaching your teen how to drive by your driving behavior, so model safe driving. Important tips to remember:

- **Always wear seatbelts.** More than half of youth who die in crashes are not wearing seat belts.
- **Don't speed.** Speeding greatly increases your risk of a collision.
- **Be extremely careful when changing lanes.** Improper lane changing is the single largest cause of fatal collisions.
- **Never drink and drive.** In Washington State, forty percent of traffic deaths involve alcohol.
- **Drive defensively.** Try to anticipate the actions of other drivers so you can respond quickly.
- **Practice.** Drive in a variety of locations and weather conditions. Keep a log (see back page of this booklet.)

Getting Started

In the beginning, start in an empty parking lot. Move on to a side street, then up to an arterial. It's wise to build a teen's driving skills by traveling the same roads repetitively, such as the trip to the grocery store. However, before your teen gets his license, make sure that he has been exposed to many types of roads and different driving conditions. Quiet two-way back roads are an ideal place to start, but drivers need experience driving in city traffic, on suburban roads, multi-lane roadways and in high-traffic situations.

Weather conditions affect driving responses, so make sure that your teen is exposed to rain, snow, ice, fog and wind while supervised, rather than later when driving alone. By recording driving conditions and situations in a practice log, you'll be able to keep track of the variety of your teen's driving experiences and fill in the gaps as needed.

Dangerous Driving Situations

All drivers need to be cautious and aware of dangerous driving conditions. Make sure your teen knows what to do if a dangerous situation arises. Here are some common situations to teach your teen about:

- **Sliding on rain-slick roads.** Rubber from tires and oil from vehicles gets mixed with rain (especially after a dry spell) and the result is a very slick road.
- **Taking curves too fast.** Keep a careful eye on your speed.
- **Crossing railroad tracks on country roads.** If you're used to city driving, you may not notice that country roads where trains cross have no bars, so listen for the train's whistle (keep your radio down) and watch out for an oncoming train.
- **Missing stop signs on unfamiliar roads.** Sometimes stop signs get hidden behind overgrown trees and shrubs or removed by vandals. Be extremely careful when driving in unfamiliar areas.
- **Pedestrians in crosswalks.** As you make a left or right-hand turn, you might notice that your attention is focused on on-coming traffic, not pedestrians who may be crossing the street.
- **Failing to look over your shoulder before changing lanes.** If a vehicle is in your blind spot, you might just hit that car in such a way as to cause your vehicle to go into a barrel roll. Just one more reason to make sure your seat belt is buckled and you always do a "shoulder check" before changing lanes.
- **Crossing over the center line of the road,** either because you are distracted by changing the radio, dialing a cell phone or some other distraction, or because of drowsy

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driving. If you hit an on-coming car, the combined force of your two vehicles colliding is explosive.

- **Traveling too closely (tailgating).** Leave ample stopping distance – one car length for every ten miles per hour of travel. And leave much more space when traveling near a large truck.

Stay Calm

During practice sessions, it's best not to overreact while on the road with a teen driver. Emotionally charged conversations distract the driver and impair driving ability. If your teen commits a serious infraction, instruct him to pull over so that you can take over the driving. Otherwise, make a note of what they are doing wrong and discuss it later. Also, go over potential problems before the start of the session, giving your teen a chance to improve their driving performance.

Time for an Intermediate License?

Do not take a teen to get an Intermediate Driver's License if you feel that they are not ready. Even if they qualify for a license, only you know their maturity level, judgment and driving skill level. Your teen must be at least sixteen to get an Intermediate Driver's License and they must have had a per-

mit with a clean driving record for at least six months. They must also have completed a driver's education course and logged 50 hours of supervised driving time. Only then can your teen take the driver's test.

Insist on limitations

Once your teen has an Intermediate Driver's License, insist that they follow the first year restrictions:

- No driving between 1:00 and 5:00 a.m.,
- No passengers under age 20 for the first six months (except family) and
- Only three passengers under age 20 for the second six months.

Also, impose any additional restrictions you feel are necessary. Provide limited use of the family car and continue to periodically ride with your teen to review safety tips and monitor her driving skills.

In Summary

There are serious risks involved when teens drive.

Inexperience, immature risk-taking, driving tired, bad weather, distractions, speeding, alcohol and drug use, and no seat belt – these problems demand the attention of all of us.

As a parent, if you are pro-active, you can ensure that your loveable teen survives and arrives alive!

► DRIVING LOG

Use this chart to photocopy as needed.

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